

Application No.: 10/813256
Amendment dated: February 23, 2006
Reply to Office action of January 18, 2006

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The drawings have been amended as required, and a typographical error in paragraph 0042 has been corrected.

The reason for the rejection under section 102 is understood to be that the deviation depicted in FIG. 6 reverses in the sense that the deviation of the steel band is to the left of a centerline ahead of the mid-point between the dies, and to the right of a centerline beyond the mid-point.

Claim 5 has been amended to express more fully and clearly what was originally intended by the language "lateral deviation. . . reverses."

As part of the clarification of the distinction between the admitted prior art of FIG. 6 and the invention as shown in FIG. 3, claim 1 has been amended to define the "straight line" as extending along the direction of forwarding of the steel band and "past the rough punching and shaving dies." In addition, claim 1 now recites that "a portion of said line extends past the rough punching die and is in the same relationship to the rough punching die as a portion of the line extending past the shaving die is to the shaving die"

Claim 5, as amended, now uses the term "lateral deviation . . . reaches a maximum or minimum" at the fixed intermediate location. The use of term "maximum or minimum" takes into account the fact that the straight line can be any arbitrarily selected straight line extending along the direction in which

Application No.: 10/813256
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the steel band is forwarded. If a point on the band crosses the straight line as the band travels, its deviation reaches a maximum. If the point on the band does not cross the straight line, then its deviation from the straight line reaches a minimum.

In FIG. 6, which represents prior art, the steel band continuously deviates to the right relative to the imaginary straight line; its deviation does not reach either a maximum or a minimum. On the other hand, in FIG. 3, the deviation of steel band reaches a maximum relative to a straight line to the right of the band and reaches a minimum relative to a straight line to the left of the band.

Claim 1, as amended, therefore, more clearly distinguishes the invention from the admitted prior art depicted in FIG. 6. Moreover, there is nothing in the admitted prior art that suggests a modification such that the deviation of the steel band would reach a maximum or minimum at an intermediate position, as now defined in claim 1.

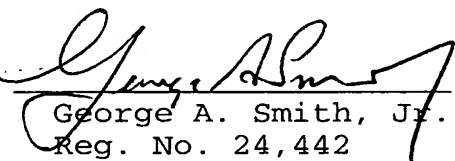
Claim 5, which was found allowable has been retained, but is now dependent on claim 1, as amended. New independent claim 6 contains all the limitations expressed in the language of claim 5 and the limitations of original claim 1, except for the paragraph "wherein said band of steel sheet from said straight line reverses. . . ." Instead of the "whereby" clause in claim 1, claim 6 positively includes the step of "aligning said shaving die closely with said edge of a link

Application No.: 10/813256
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plate formed by said rough punching die." It is believed that new claim 6 should be allowed for the same reasons for which claim 5 was found allowable.

Favorable reconsideration and allowance are requested in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks. If the Examiner is of the opinion that there are remaining issues that might be resolved by a telephone interview, he is invited to contact the Applicants' attorney at the telephone number given below.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosures:

one replacement sheet of drawing
one annotated sheet showing changes

Application No.: 10/813256
Amendment dated: February 23, 2006
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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please amend the drawings by substituting the attached replacement sheet for the original drawing sheet bearing FIG.

1. An annotated sheet, showing the changes, is enclosed.



Fig.1

